

Cheltenham
Ps Rob Buckingham
19 & 20 March 2016

EXTRAVAGANT WORSHIP

Message Notes

Text: John 12:1-11

(Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:1-11; Luke 7:36-50)

Extra = "Outside of"

Vagari = "To wander, roam"

Thus to wander outside of what is usually considered enough!

Six days before the Passover (Yom Shabbat)

Hebrew	Transliteration	English
יום ראשון	Yom Rishon	First Day
יום שני	Yom Sheini	Second Day
יום שלישי	Yom Shlishi	Third Day
יום רביעי	Yom R'vi'i	Fourth Day
יום חמישי	Yom Chamishi	Fifth Day
יום שישי	Yom Shishi	Sixth Day
יום שבת	Yom Shabbat	Sabbath Day

The Characters

- Jesus and the twelve disciples
- Simon – a Pharisee and a (former) leper who had probably been healed by Jesus (Mark's Gospel)
- Lazarus – whom Jesus had recently raised from the dead
- Martha – who was serving the meal
- Mary – the sister of Martha and Lazarus

She came into the room with an alabaster jar of half a litre of pure nard, a very expensive perfume. She broke the seal on the jar and poured the perfume on Jesus' feet (and head) as He was reclining at the table. As she stood behind Him at His feet weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears. Then she let down her hair to wipe His feet, kiss them and poured perfume on them. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume – Extravagant worship

Anointing a head was common but not feet. Water would be supplied for feet. Putting expensive oil on feet would have been shocking – Extravagant worship

Pure nard was aromatic oil made from a root probably imported from Northern India. The alabaster jar used to contain this expensive perfume was also a thing of beauty and value. The whole thing was said to be worth "more than a year's wages" (about \$60,000 in our economy) – Extravagant worship

A woman would never uncover or let her hair down in public.

When we read all the Gospel accounts of this story we find out that Mary had lived a very sinful life in Bethany possibly as a prostitute – Extravagant worship

The room was filled with fragrance and bad attitudes...

The Response

The magnificence of the moment was marred by the murmur of some small-minded men. Mary had broken the whole thing – surely a little dab would do! – Extravagant worship

The Lesson

There are certain times when extravagance is appropriate!

Examples...

- The Tabernacle in the wilderness (Gold, tapestry, carved wood and creativity - all for a temporary worship centre in the desert)
- Solomon's Temple - magnificent stonework, colorful curtains, ornate windows, elegant steps and GOLD (solid, beaten and overlaid)
- The New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10-21)

Let us be regularly guilty of extravagant worship!

It may be out of character.
Others will certainly criticize you for it.
But it may be just what is needed

Discussion Questions

1. Share instances when you “wandered outside of what is usually considered enough” – when you have been extravagant. What did you do? What were the outcomes? Is this sort of thing out of character for you?
2. Simon the Pharisee was a former leper who had probably been healed by Jesus, and yet he demonstrated so little grace towards Mary. Why do you think that we as the recipients of grace can sometimes act so gracelessly?
3. How do you think Lazarus would have felt having been raised from the dead only to find out there were death threats against him? Have you ever had times when you felt like everything was against you? How did you get through those times? How did your faith in God help you?
4. Have you ever felt that other people’s worship was extravagant compared to yours?
5. Do you recognize anything of Judas’ attitude in your own life? *“Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year’s wages.” He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.”*
6. Jesus’ statement, “You will always have the poor among you,” is not an excuse not to help the poor. Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 15:11 which urges generosity to the poor, who will always be in the land. The context promises that God will bless His people if they care for the poor. How can you individually, as well as a Connect Group, help those who are less fortunate?
7. Read about the extravagance of God regarding The New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:10-21. Discuss how you feel about this in the light of God’s extravagant love demonstrated to us for all eternity.